

Chas. D. Shirley, Rondeau, Ontario.

October 9, 1893.

Mr. Shirley has the only fishing station at this place. He has 4 pound nets, and also an interest in 2 others. All near Rondeau. He seems to have a grievance against every one in this region, and also against the Administration. He had either been a poor observer or preferred not to give himself away. At any rate, obtained very little information of any value from him, and nothing of historical interest. He was courteous to us, and gave us dinner, or we might have gone hungry, as there is no tavern in this region.

Mr. Shirley is a native of Huron, Ohio. He has had about 25 years' experience in fishing, and his father was a fisherman before him. He came to Rondeau in 1875, but a part of the time since then made his home in Kingsville,

farther west on the north shore of lake Erie.

He began fishing pounds here in 1888, and could give us no information of importance relative to anything preceding that date.

There are 18 or 19 pounds between Rondeau and McClains. Mr. Shirley's pounds are situated 1 east of Point Rondeau and 3 west of it.

Previous to last year a few gill nets were used about here, but the Government refused to license them last year and this year.

Does not think that gill netting is a proper mode of fishing, and has used gill nets himself only to a very slight extent. His objection to them is based upon the fact that the fish die in them and are not in so good condition as those taken from the pounds. Often in stormy weather they have to leave them out 2 or more nights. Sometimes the nets get adrift, the dead fish decay and tend to pollute the waters.

Gill nets, however, have never been a feature of this region. What are used now are set in the fall after the pounds are taken up, December, and they may be employed more or less of the winter under the ice. They produce scarcely anything for the market, the catch being mainly for the use of the fishermen. The entire catch by this method has always been very small. The gill nets are set about $1/2$ mile from shore, in a depth of about 25 feet.

Drag seines were employed before pounds came into use.

In his pounds uses a $2 \frac{1}{4}$ inch (ext.) mesh for all of the pot except the end where they bunt the fish, where the mesh is 2 inches (ext.).

The proposed enlargement of the mesh (to take effect next year) to $4 \frac{1}{2}$ inch mesh(ext.) for whitefish and salmon trout and $3 \frac{1}{2}$ inch mesh (ext.) for herring and pickerel would

cause a large proportion of the catch to gill, and if enforced, they might as well give up the business. The above described mesh is for the pots in pounds, and is prescribed in a notice from Ottawa, dated April 13, 1893.

In 1888 there were 6 or 8 more pounds between Rondeau and McClains than there are now. The reduction has been caused by the Dept. refusing to license now as many pounds as there were then.

In 1875 there were probably ⁴not_^ more than 2 or 3 pounds in this same area.

Previously there were not as many drag seines used as there are pounds now. There are many good beaches where seines can be used in this district. The seines were used through the entire season, At this place they were worked on shares.

Previous to 1888, however, the fishing about here never amounted to much. It was only in that year that they began to run a boat

from here to Sandusky. Before that time there was only a very limited market for the fish.

They get very few whitefish here at any time of the year. Has never had a larger catch than 300 pounds in a single lift of his 4 pounds, and any catch approaching this is extraordinary. Much of the time may get only 1 or 2 a day. The average run in size is from 2 $1/2$ to 4 pounds. The largest he has taken weighed 13 $1/4$ pounds. There are some small ones down to $1/2$ pound, but not many. These are released alive, and there is no trouble in doing so.

He has caught more whitefish this year than last. Ascribes the increase to artificial planting.

The pots to the pounds about here measure from 26 to 30 feet square, and are from 26 to 40 feet deep. They are set in water about 2 feet shallower, or in depths of 24 to 38 feet, so that the bottom rests upon the bottom of the

lake. The mesh in the hearts and tunnel is 6 inches; in the leaders 9 and 10 inches. The leaders are 60 to 90 rods long. The pots are set 95 to 100 rods from the shore. At this place there is a bar on which the inner end of the leaders terminate. There is a depth of 12 feet between the bar and the shore.

Herring are the principal catch in the pound nets at all times.

The pounds have been set sometime in April or about May 1. They are now kept down until November 1. At this time he takes his pounds up for good. Up to last year, however, he kept his pounds set through November, and was supposed to free all whitefish taken, but he acknowledges that he took them and sent them to market.

They get herring all through the year. They come in runs, and count on at least one good run every month, but not at the same time of the month. Sometimes they will take only a

few pounds, and at others several tons. July is the best month here for herring. They are just about as common in the spring as in the fall. Are always troubled with severe storms in October, which injure the pounds and cause much expense. In any year since he began fishing had he taken up his pounds in September it would have been a saving to him, as the cost of repairing nets in October has always been greater than the profits on his catch.

It does not pay here to fish through November, and the enforcement of the close season through that month will not interfere with his interests.

The bottom here consists of sand and clay, not suited to the spawning of herring and they have no spawning fish here. They go to the westward and among the Bass and Peelee Islands for that purpose.

Take a salmon trout in the pounds only once in a great while.

The herring taken in the pounds average about $1/2$ pound in weight. Has caught some weighing as much as 3 pounds. Has caught no very small herring for 3 years. Four years ago caught immense numbers of little fellows, measuring perhaps 5 or 6 inches long. At times they gave them trouble in lifting their pots.

He thinks herring are on the increase. Have caught many more herring in this vicinity this year than last.

Same fishes, black bass and pickerel, are on the decrease. Thinks the catching of so many adult or parent fishes of the bass have caused their decrease. They are not given the necessary opportunity to protect their young on the nests, as is required by nature. On the other hand, the bass and pickerel feed upon the young herring, and the decrease of those sport fishes is for the good of the herring.

The pickerel begin to run the instant the

ice starts to move. They move toward the westward in this part of the lake, and bigger catches are made farther west than at this point, as a large proportion have passed this region before the pounds are set. They appear later farther west.

They begin to take gray (yellow) pickerel as soon as the pounds are set. They do not, however, catch a very large amount of pickerel here. In the spring they do not take $1/10$ as many pickerel as they do herring. As the water gets warmer the pickerel leave the shore. They take scarcely any in August. They return in September. Then it is chiefly the blue pickerel. But they do not get as many as in the spring. This applies to the coast between Rondeau and Point Pelee. There is a difference after passing to the west of the latter point.

Taking the year through, the catch of pickerel would probably not be $1/20$ that of herring.

During the past summer he has taken about 2 tons of German Carp. They weigh generally about 4 or 5 pounds. The largest he obtained weighed 18 pounds. He thinks this species was introduced at Sandusky about 5 years ago. There is money in this fish, and if he had control of a pond of about 10 to 15 acres, he could make a great deal out of it by raising German carp for the market. They sell well. On the Sandusky marshes, where there is extensive duck shooting, however, it is claimed they eat up the duck food, such as celery grass, and ducks do not come there as abundantly now as formerly.

All of his fish is shipped to Sandusky.

They take very few bass in the pounds. Never caught more than 50 pounds at a single lift of 6 pounds. That would be an unusual catch. Generally do not take more than 1, 2 or 3 at a time, if any.

Get only few mullet and suckers in the

pounds.

Have caught more catfish this year than usual. They weigh from 3 to 20 pounds apiece. Get 3 or 4 at almost every haul.

Has taken about 75 sturgeon this year in his 6 pounds. They would average about 60 pounds in weight. This is also about the average catch of other years. No hook and line fishing is carried on about here for sturgeon. They catch them in the pounds after every blow.

A southwest wind is the best for bringing fish into the pounds here.

Take some cusk in the pounds, generally only a few, but sometimes a good many. In the spring some are sold, but generally they are thrown away.

Take few white bass in the pounds. They never grow large.

Get many sheepshead at times. Throw most of them away.

Caught 1 maskinonge only this year. The sportsmen get a good many by trolling for them in the bay.

Rondeau Bay contains about all the commoner fishes of the neighboring parts of the lake except herring and whitefish. The species are mainly perch, black bass, catfish, carp, pike, pickerel, maskinonge, etc. Perch are the most common. Black bass are also very common. Many persons come down to fish in the bay during the summer. They are not of the richer class, and do not spend much money. They do their own rowing, etc. They do not leave much money in the region.

All netting was stopped in the Bay January 1, 1893. Had previously done some seining and gill netting. Does not think, however, that over 1 seine or exceeding 200 rods of gill nets had been lately in use there. Many pike were taken by these means.

Thinks it was unjust to have entirely

prohibited this netting. The farmers on the bay had been in the habit of securing some fish for salting for their own winter use, but they are now prevented from doing that.

Hoop nets (fyke nets) have also been used in the bay to some extent. It is one of the best nets to fish with in such places. It is splendid for taking bass, and catches very large quantities.

The depth of water in the bay averages about 8 1/2 feet, and does not much exceed that

During the close season in the spring he does not have to throw many fish away. Does not catch many of the prohibited kinds.

He will not begin fishing next spring before May. Does not pay him to begin earlier

The mesh in the pots of the pounds should not exceed 2 1/4 inches, extension. By use this will finally shrink to about 2 inches.

In making the pounds they use 15 thread cotton, medium lay.

In the back of the pot where they dip the fish out the mesh is 2 inches.

Sure to get a gale by the last of October which does much damage to pounds, and it is a hardship and does not pay to rig them up again if close season begins November 1.

The license which he has paid for this year permits him to fish up to November 1. The notice since received requires him to have his pound nets up by November 1.

It would be entirely agreeable to him to have the close season begin November 10, and continue through winter. No fish to be landed after that date, and nets to be taken up as soon as possible.

Does not think it just that the fishermen should be obliged to stop fishing November 1, when the Government fishes pounds through that month to obtain spawn for hatchery.

Whitefish will most always die after stripping.

Gill net fish are inferior for the market to pound net fish. He compared 2 fish, one taken from the gill net, dead; the other from a pound; both being cleaned and fried. The latter will fry hard, the former soft, and will sputter for sometime in the frying pan from the quantity of water it contains.

Obtain occasionally what they call a saw belly, which he supposes to be the same as the "shad" or alewife of Lake Ontario. They run up to 3 pounds in weight and are rare. They do not die here as in Lake Ontario (Probably something else).

Believes that the artificial hatching of whitefish has done good, and is in favor of increasing operations in that direction.

Believes in having proper fishery regulations providing the same are uniform in their application to all parts of the lake. Otherwise they are unjust and accomplish no good.

Get no spawning herring or whitefish in

this locality. He did when he was fishing at Kingsville, where the whitefish do not spawn earlier than November 10.

Both herring and whitefish spawn at about the same time.

Sandusky tugs fish with gill nets in the summer out in the lake, out of sight of land, and may possibly come into Canadian waters.

The water is cooler on the east side of both Point Pelee and Point Pins, than it is on the west side of those points.

Water is cooler on the north side of the lake than on the south side, during all the season. He thinks that the water from the Detroit River flows eastward mainly along the north shore of the lake.

During June, July and August the current is down this side of the lake all the time. Beginning in September, it flows to the westward, and continues to do so until in December. The strength of the current at different times

varies from nearly still water to a current of 5 miles an hour. This is without influence of wind. In these matters he differs with a recent official American report, which see. His observations apply to the north side of the lake in this region. Cannot say how far out into lake the currents are the same. His observations cover about 1 mile out.

The principal whitefish fishery in the summer is between Erie and Long Point in deep water. In that region he has heard that they have caught as much as 1500 tons of whitefish during a single summer season.

The principal fall fishery for whitefish is about Huron and Sandusky, and the islands.

The south side of the lake does the most fishing in the ratio of at least 100 to 1. They could do more fishing on this side, however, if they were not prevented by the Government.

Most of the pounds on Canadian side are

owned in the United States.

Canadian licenses define the boundaries of the fishing sights, which vary in extent in different places; as do also the number of pounds which one man can fish, the same not exceeding 5. Each man is supposed to reside by or near his pounds.

Every fisherman here must be naturalized (beginning this season he said, but he did not seem to be clear on this subject).

No ciscoe are taken about here.

The sturgeon are sold round to the tugs. The caviar is taken out on the way over.